

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the drawings were objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they did not include the reference sign mentioned in the description for the numeral "23." By this paper, Figs. 1 and 3 on drawing sheets 1 and 2 have been amended to include this reference numeral.

The abstract of the disclosure was objected to because of the use of the legal phraseology "comprises." By this paper, the abstract has been amended to overcome that objection.

In the Office Action, claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Rohleider et al. Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

The present invention is directed to a sparger system for use in a reactor. The sparger system comprises a gas outlet for passing gas into the reactor and a gas distribution system to supply the gas to the outlet. The sparger system is located within the reactor. Thus, both the outlets and the gas distribution system are positioned within a reactor. The gas distribution system is positioned at least 15 cm above the sparger gas outlets. Additionally, the distance between the gas outlets and the reactor floor is less than 20 cm. By this paper, claim 1 has been amended to further indicate that the gas distribution system has a gas supply connection via the reactor wall which is 0.3 to 8 m above the sparger outlets.

The Rohleider reference is directed to an annular vessel for holding radioactive solutions which contain solids. It is not directed to a reaction vessel. Further, the Rohleider vessel includes a plurality of pulsators charged with air mounted in the ring-shaped interior of the vessel so as to extend into the solution. The pulsators operate to discharge undissolved solids out of the vessel with the flow of solution and prevent sedimentation.

Accordingly, there are numerous differences between the Rohleider vessel and the invention set forth in claim 1. First, the sparger system of the present invention is designed for use in a reactor. Rohleider does not disclose a reactor. Second, the sparger system of the current invention includes a gas distribution system which is positioned within a reactor along with the sparger gas outlets. The Rohleider reference does not disclose any such distribution system. Third, the Rohleider reference does not disclose positioning the sparger gas outlets at least 15 cm below the distribution system. Finally, the Rohleider references does not disclose a gas distribution system

which has a gas supply connection via the reactor wall which is 0.3 to 8 m above the sparger outlets.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is not anticipated by the Rohleider et al. reference. Further, Applicants submit that the above-identified futures are neither taught nor suggested by the Rohleider reference and therefore would not have been obvious in view of that reference or the other sited art. In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the claims are now in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner find any impediment to the prompt allowance of the claims which could be corrected by telephone interview with undersigned, the Examiner is requested to initiate such an interview.

Respectfully submitted,

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